

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

For the construction of an agricultural / stable building on the land at:

**High Up Farm,
High Up Lane,
Poolend,
Leek,
Staffordshire Moorlands
ST13 8SD**

Applicant: **Mr J Neilson**

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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

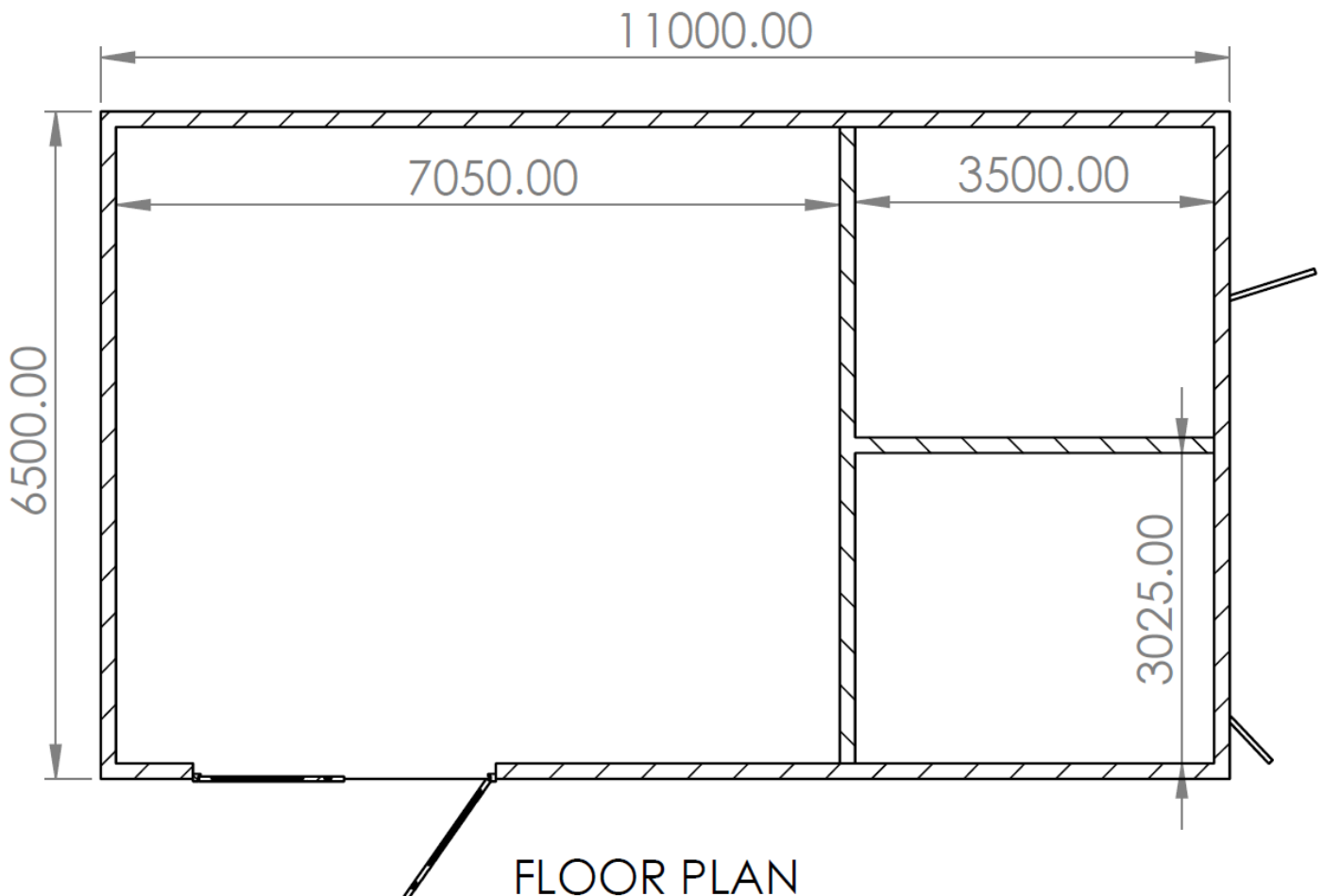
This Design and Access Statement supports a planning application for the construction of a mixed-use agricultural and equestrian building on the land at High Up Farm, High Up Lane, Leek.

The design and access statement covers both the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed building and although it is a private development, it also briefly covers access to the development.

AMOUNT

The amount of development proposed is a typical small-scale agricultural / stable building consisting of a steel portal-framed building with a footprint of 71.5 square metres.

The floor area of the proposed building is 11m wide by 6.5m deep (71.5m²) and is modestly sized for an agricultural or stable building on a smallholding. The proportions have been chosen to enable 2 x stables for horses (belonging to the applicant's children) at one end of the building, and the main part of the building to be used for storage of a tractor and other agricultural equipment for managing the land.



LAYOUT

The layout of the proposed agricultural / stable building has been chosen so that it can be accessed from the existing access track that borders the domestic curtilage of the farmhouse, and also by the horses from the grazing land at the stables end of the building.

The ground level here drops away as you move north away from the farmhouse, which helps to reduce the prominence of the proposed building in the surrounding landscape.

In this position it is bounded to the rear by an existing boundary hedge that provides screening. The existing features on the site have been taken into account in determining the layout, with the doors on the east side of the building facing onto the existing access track and an existing area of crushed hardcore will end up in front of the doors, so will enable easy access and manoeuvring into the new building from the existing track. This will provide a comfortable, level access to the building from the main part of the access track without any steep inclines, steps, or sudden changes in level and allows for adequate turning with farm equipment such as trailers.

The route to the new building is via the existing gate and access track from the highway. Please see the submitted site plan for details.

The proposed building is orientated to fit into the existing area of available land on this part of the site, with the roof pitched in the same direction to match those on the domestic outbuildings in the curtilage of the dwelling for the sake of consistency.

SCALE

The scale of the building is small in relation to many modern agricultural buildings. The highest point at the ridge of the dual-pitched roof is 5.6m, which then slopes down to 3.4m at the eaves.

The roof pitch on the building has been chosen to match the roof slope of the other buildings on the site.

The location for the proposed building has been selected to take advantage of the reducing land level here, as well as being relatively close to the existing buildings on the site to reduce the visual impact.

LANDSCAPING

An existing area of crushed stone provides a surface to the area immediately in front of the door to the building, joining up to the existing access track.

Rainwater run-off from the roof of the building will drain to soakaways on land in the ownership of the applicant.

APPEARANCE

The appearance of the proposed building will be similar to other agricultural or equestrian buildings across the Staffordshire Moorlands, with overlapping vertical timber cladding on all four walls.

The roof covering would be bitumen felt tiles (or an alternative material and colour that can be agreed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority).

POLICY

The site is not located in the area designated as Green Belt but is in open countryside and, there are no specific policies that cover new agricultural buildings. Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy states that within the “other rural areas the rural economy will be sustained by supporting the diversification of existing farming enterprises (in accordance with policy R1)”.

Policy R1 – Rural Diversification states that “All development in the rural areas outside the boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent which it... ..promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity...”

This application is for a general-purpose agricultural building with 2 x small stables at one end, so policies to encourage diversification are not strictly applicable. However agricultural buildings are generally considered acceptable in rural areas.

The proposed building would not have a damaging effect on the character and quality of the landscape due to its small scale, the high quality of its design and choice of vernacular materials, its position on lower ground away from the house in the slope of the land to reduce its impact, and the existing screening and buildings nearby.

The applicant is of course willing to engage with the Local Planning Authority and is happy to enter into negotiations if there is a preference for different or more suitable material choices that respect the rural vernacular of the area.

DESIGN

The design of the building is typically agricultural or equestrian and chosen to meet the security requirements of storing agricultural equipment and feedstuffs, as well as providing 2 small stables for the family horses. A plain rectangular form with a low roof pitch provides useful storage space without an overly complex building form (e.g. L- shaped). Many equestrian buildings alone are larger than this proposed building is.

USE

The use of the proposed building is for storing agricultural equipment such as a quad bike & trailer, a small tractor, pasture topper, chain harrows, as well as smaller hand tools and fencing materials for general farm maintenance. It would also be used for storing hay bales and supplementary feedstuffs for sheep and cattle and for the family horses for feeding in winter. It is also proposed to use the building as shelter for livestock in extreme weather conditions or in welfare situations, e.g. for sick animals or when lambing.

The proposed agricultural building would therefore not appear out of context in relation to uses surrounding the site, the relevant planning policies for the location, the choice of materials and design details, and the existing screening provided by boundary hedgerows.

Please see below picture of beef cattle on the land at High Up Farm; the farm house can be seen on the horizon (the viewing direction is roughly south-east); the proposed agricultural building would be on lower ground to the right of the farmhouse when viewed from this direction, the tarmac access road to Lower Foker farm can also be seen on the right:



ACCESS

Access to the proposed building would be via the existing gates from the highway and the existing access track around the back of the farmhouse. the small area of crushed stone hard-standing between the door of the proposed building and the existing access track will ensure that the ground would not get churned up in wet weather.

It is hoped that this level of detail provided in the access component of the statement is proportionate to the nature and scale of the access that will be required to the site. (For proposals which will have no public access, the access component need not be long).

CONTEXT APPRAISAL (CONCLUSION)

The proposed agricultural / stable building is of an appropriate design for its intended purpose, is of an acceptable scale, and the proposed materials are typical of the rural vernacular in the surrounding area. Its setting on lower ground levels and its relative proximity to the existing buildings on the site reduces the visual impact on the wider area. The retention of existing hedgerow screening results in no harm to the landscape or the character of the area. The use of the proposed building is an appropriate use of land in the open countryside for the purposes of agriculture and for stabling.

Any other issues can be controlled by condition, and the applicant would greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide any further information or clarification that is required during the consideration of the application, prior to determination.

If any further information or explanation is required please contact
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